been launched by the Washington based Internal Food Policy Research Institute;

(b) whether Government would also propose to reorient relative public policies for closer ties between the agriculture and health sector which can be highly rewarding; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There are already research programmes on analysis of linkages between health and agriculture sector in the country.

(c) The research programme especially focus on health of female workers and technological options to reduce brudgery. The research has also focused on nutritional impact of changes in agriculture.

Government of lndia in its National Nutrition Policy has already committed to the inter-sectoral collaboration to ensure health, food and nutrition security. Agriculture is one of the thirteen sectors involved in this process.

New research initiative in the area of food fortification aims to improve micronutrient status of the community. Similarly, the crop bio-technology approach for Food and Nutrition security envisages inter-sectoral collaboration between agriculture and health sectors, to ensure adequate production.

Assistance to farmers for purchasing fertilizers, seeds and Implements

†2265. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:
SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI:
SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any loan or financial assistance is provided to the farmers for purchase of fertilizers, seeds and implement;

(b) if so, the funds provided to Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh during the years 2004-05 and 2005-06 respectively; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether there is any proposal to effect an increase in the said financial assistance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. Banks provide loan to farmers for purchase of fertilizers, seeds and implements, etc.

(b) The amount of crop loan provided by banks in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh is as under:—

(Rs. crore)

	2004-05	2005-06
Uttar Pradesh Madhya	4955.00	7137.00
Pradesh	3651.35	4897.13

(c) During 2006-07, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development would be providing refinance assistance to State Cooperative Banks upto 40% at interest rate of 2.5% p.a. for financing Short-Term (Seasonal Agricultural Operations) loans.

Committee probing into the cause for suicides

2266. SHRI M. V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Committee appointed by the Prime Minister to probe the causes of growing farmers' suicides has submitted its report:

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the measures recommended to redress the alarming situation and the action proposed in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) No Committee has been appointed by the Prime Minister exclusively to probe the causes of growing suicide cases by farmers. At the instance of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), a Fact Finding Team was constituted by the Planning Commission to, *inter alia,* find out the factors leading to rural distress in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra and to study the existing relief packages